



BOROUGH OF BISHOP'S CASTLE URBAN DISTRICT

R E P O R T

- of the -

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

- for the year -

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BOROUGH OF BISHOP'S CASTLE URBAN DISTRICT.

R E P O R T of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1925.

The Annual Report for 1925 is, by direction of the Ministry of Health, to be a Survey Report. A Survey Report is called for at intervals of five years, and differs from the intervening modified Annual Reports in dealing more comprehensively with important changes in the public health services during the period, and generally as to the progress of improvement of the public health.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (Acres). 1867.

Population (Census 1921). 1267. Estimated (1925). 1259.

The population fell from 1891 to 1901 by 208 persons; from 1901-11 it increased slightly by 31; from 1911-21 the population fell again from 1409 to 1267, a decrease of 142. It is now estimated to be showing no appreciable change.

The Borough forms an area some three miles in length by a mean breadth of about one mile, lying within the south-west border of Shropshire, touching the Montgomeryshire border at one end, but otherwise surrounded by the Clun Rural District. It has the small town of Bishop's Castle about the centre. The elevation varies from about 500 feet O.D. in the valley at the south-east and to 1000 feet or more in the hill country forming the north-west end. The town lies on a hillside rising out of the valley, the main street rising steeply from about 600 feet to 700 feet O.D., and the houses are placed on either side of the street and about the crest of the hill above it. The subsoil is the Wenlock and Ludlow beds of upper Silurian age. The natural drainage is from north and west to south and east by small streams, the District lying upon the drainage system of the river Teme. The town is a market town and borough of great age, and the area outside is very sparsely populated. There are no industries in the District. A Creamery and Cheese factory was established and carried on for a few years recently in the town, but has now been removed. There are local gas, and electricity, works. A Secondary School for boys and girls has been erected in the Borough in recent years, to serve a large rural area as well as the town itself.

Number of inhabited houses (1921). 333.

Number of families or separate occupiers (1921). 342.

Rateable Value. £7,613.

Sum represented by a penny rate. £22/9/3.

	<u>Total.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	
Births.	(Legitimate 27	11	16)	
	(Illegitimate 2	-	2)	Birth Rate. 23.0
Deaths.	15	4	11	Death Rate. 11.9

Number of women dying in consequence of Childbirth:-

From sepsis nil; from other causes nil.

Deaths of infants under one year per 1,000 births:-

Legitimate 37 ; Illegitimate - ; Total 34.

Deaths from Measles (all ages) nil.

" " Whooping Cough (all ages) nil.

" " Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) nil.

1925.

	<u>Bishop's Castle U.D.</u>	<u>England & Wales</u>
Birth rate per 1,000 of population	23.0	18.3
Death rate " " " "	11.9	12.2
Infant death rate per 1,000 born	34.	75.

The birth rate was considerably above that of the two previous years, and above the District's average.

The death rate was again very low. No death was due to any of the common infectious diseases, or to Influenza or tuberculosis. Cancer caused one death and heart disease 6.

The infant death rate was very low. In the past two years there has been one death of an infant under one year.

The following table shows average comparative rates for the past five years.

1921-25.

	<u>Bishop's Castle U.D.</u>	<u>England & Wales</u>
Birth rate per 1,000 of population	18.4	21.4
Death rate " " " "	13.7	12.2
Infant death rate per 1,000 born	34.	77.

The average infant death rate for the years 1907-14 was 100, and for the years 1915-1919 was 105. The great reduction shown in recent years is a satisfactory indication of progress in education as to matters of Child Welfare, and of the value of the Health Visiting system of the County Council.

HEALTH SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT.

Hospitals: Tuberculosis. Shirlett Sanatorium for early cases.
Prees Heath Sanatorium for advanced cases. Shropshire
Orthopaedic Hospital for surgical cases.

Children. County Council's Babies Home at Wellington.

Smallpox. The County Smallpox Hospitals at Ludlow and Wellington.

There is no Fever Hospital at present. The County Council in 1913 after Enquiry issued an Order constituting a Hospital District for the South and South-west of the County, including the Borough. A site was adopted and a Hospital Committee formed, but the War prevented further progress, and a scheme for provision of a Central Isolation Hospital is under consideration by the County Council.

Ambulance. The County Council's motor ambulance is available for infectious and other cases.

Clinics and Treatment Centres. There is no Child Welfare Centre or School Clinic in the District. The County Dispensaries for Tuberculosis and Venereal Diseases at Shrewsbury are available for the District.

Public Health Officers. The Medical Officer of Health is M.O.H. for the S.W. Salop Combined Districts and a whole time officer. The Sanitary Inspector is also Surveyor to the Council and a whole time officer. Salary contributions are received from Exchequer grant.

Nursing Arrangements. General. By the District nurses of the Shropshire Nursing Federation an association having been formed in the Borough. The Local Authority is not concerned with the scheme of co-ordination or the financial arrangements.

Infectious Disease. The County Council provides for Health visiting and nursing assistance where necessary, for Measles, Whooping Cough and pneumonia in the case of children under 5 years of age, and for cases of Ophthalmia neonatorum.

Midwives. The District Council does not employ or subsidise midwives. The number practising in the district is 2.

ADOPTIVE ACTS, etc., in force in the District.

Acts. Infectious Disease (Prevention) Act 1890.
Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act 1890.
Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act 1907 - Section 19 was adopted during the year. Part IV, (Sections 52 to 58 and 60 to 68 inclusive).
Part VI, as to Recreation grounds.

Bye-laws. Nuisances. Cleansing of Footways, etc.
Slaughterhouses. Common Lodging Houses.
New Streets and Buildings.

Note. New bye-laws as to Slaughterhouses and as to New Streets and Buildings were adopted in 1923.

Regulations. Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water Supply. The Council maintains a public system of supply laid on to the houses. The water is upland surface water from an uninhabited and uncultivated moorland catchment area, which is to all intents above suspicion as regards possibilities of contamination, and the water, when examined, has been found to be of excellent quality for drinking and domestic use. The supply is unfiltered.

The population supplied by the scheme is about 1,200 persons, and 312 houses are connected. There are very few houses in the town to which the supply is not laid on. During the past five years the mains have been extended about 500 yards for the supply of the new County Secondary School, and the Council's Housing Site of 12 houses. A total of 15 new houses have been connected.

At the main reservoir an emergency pump exists for maintaining the supply in times of drought by utilising a strong stream which comes in to the valley below the dam. During the dry summers of 1921 and 1923 pumping was resorted to and the supply to the town turned off at nights. During the past two years pumping has not been necessary and the supply was only curtailed for about one week during the night in July 1925.

Stream Pollution. No instance of pollution has occurred. There are two small streams in the District, the 'Pinal' which is dry in the Summer, and the Colebatch brook. This latter receives the surface water drains of the town and the Sewage outfall works effluent, which is efficiently purified.

Sewerage and Drainage. The Sewerage system is adequate and efficient. The following note by the Surveyor well describes the system generally:-

The Town area was sewered about 1910 with an up to date sewerage system complete with sewage disposal works, and with ventilated sewers, to which all the existing drains and connections were made. The old system was left to carry away surface water from roofs, yards, and pavements, etc. The disposal works consist of two settling tanks and two stone tanks together with four filter beds complete with automatic sprinkler arms (two primary and two secondary). The works are "Adams Hydraulics" and are in very good condition and working efficiently.

The soil sewer and the surface water sewer were both extended about 200 yards to the Council's Housing Site (Kerry Lane Site) in order to drain 12 houses erected by the Council.

During the last 5 years 22 house connections have been made to the Council's sewerage system.

Closet Accommodation. Within the sewered area one new W.C. has been constructed and connected with the Council's sewer during the year. The number within the sewered area is now approximately:-

W.C's. .. 233.
(Of which 46 are hand flushed)

Privies and pail closets 3.

Eleven privies have been converted to W.C's in the past five years.

As regards hand flushed W.C's it is desirable, on sanitary grounds, that wherever possible fixed flushing cisterns should be enforced.

Scavenging. The Surveyor reports:-

"The Council collect (by contract) all the house refuse in the town area, by collections on three days each week. The cleaning of privies and pail closets and the collection of trade refuse is not undertaken by the Council, but burnable trade refuse is disposed of by the Council by means of the "Meldrum's Timperley" destructor installed by the Council in 1924.

For collection, house holders deposit their refuse receptacles on the streets and pavements in boxes and buckets (and a small number of sanitary bins). The provision of sanitary dust bins has not been enforced in the District, and although a few proper sanitary bins are to be seen, the majority of receptacles are wooden boxes and buckets, etc."

Smoke Abatement. One case of smoke nuisance during the past five years, called for attention. This occurred at the local Creamery in 1922. Representations were repeatedly made, and some improvement followed in 1923. The works have now been removed from the District.

Schools. There are two elementary schools. They have the town water laid on and are connected to the sewers, and are in good sanitary condition.

The following is an Account furnished by the Sanitary Inspector,
of Sanitary Work for the Year.

Number of houses which have been inspected during the above period, either in connection with outbreaks of infectious disease, or in consequence of complaints, or in the course of a systematic Sanitary Survey (including inspections under Housing, Town Planning Act).	-	176
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Number of legal notices sent	-	2
Number of informal notices sent	-	57
Number of such notices complied with	-	21
Number of letters written	-	40

PARTICULARS OF SANITARY MATTERS REFERRED TO IN THE ABOVE NOTICES:

(a) Houses to be disinfected after Infectious Disease	-	Nil
(b) Deficient or objectionable water supply	-	2
(c) New drains to be constructed or old drains to be amended	-	21
(d) New closets to be provided or old ones to be amended in construction	-	14
(e) Houses damp or dirty, or admitting rain, or weather, or otherwise in a bad sanitary condition	-	47
(f) Offensive accumulations of all kinds	-	4
(g) Animals so kept as to be a nuisance	-	Nil
(h) Houses overcrowded	-	Nil

Houses disinfected after infectious disease (other than phthisis)	-	2
Houses disinfected in cases of phthisis	-	2
Privies converted to earth closets	-	-
Privies converted to water closets	-	-
Plans for new houses passed	-	- (One for re-construction).
Certificates issued for water supply to new houses	-	-
Houses connected to public water supply	-	-
Houses connected to public sewerage	-	1
Lengths of new sewers laid	-	Nil
Lengths of new water mains laid	-	Nil

Proceedings before Magistrates: Nil.

Remarks: In one case proceedings were pending at the end of the year.

J. P. JORDAN.

Inspector of Nuisances.

HOUSING.

General Housing Conditions. With a population which has declined in the past 30 years by some 300 persons no general shortage of houses has been felt. To supply a need for some modern artisan houses the Council has built 12 non-parlour type houses on one site under the 1919 Housing Act. Three other private houses have been built during the past 5 years, without subsidy. Apart from the Council's houses there has been no building of cottages for many years. There appears to be a demand still for houses of better class than that of the old and inferior cottages, and as private enterprise with the aid of the Subsidy does not appear to be forthcoming the Council should consider the advisability of further building. Such action would be specially useful if it led to the abolition of some of the worst of the very old cottages.

Overcrowding. No serious cases of overcrowding have come under notice. The Census of 1921 showed, on the Registrar General's standard of overcrowding, of houses with more than 2 persons per room, only 0.4 per cent of the population so overcrowded. This was the lowest figure in the County.

Fitness of Houses. There are among the old houses of the town many which must be considered as not in all respects reasonably fit for habitation. Some are damp, and some seriously damp, owing to faulty construction, some of the stone used being porous. Others are in a condition of progressive decay, or are deficient in respect of air space, light, ventilation, or food storage. This property presents much difficulty both as to its abolition, competent reconstruction, or repair. It is let at very low rentals to a class earning low wages, and quite unable to pay the rent of such dwellings as the very reasonably rented Council houses. The Inspector experiences much difficulty in the matter of repair work, owing to the high cost of work, and in some cases the circumstances of the small owners. The Inspector reports that "Large improvement cannot be got done because owners would let the house go down before they will spend the money required, and in many cases the houses are not worth the repair." By repeated pressure for some of the more important repairs the Inspector has obtained some considerable improvements, but it is generally a slow process.

If the facilities to be afforded by the Rural Housing Act now foreshadowed are to be made applicable to Districts such as the Borough, more progress might be practicable.

Number of new houses erected during the year:-

(a) Total.	-	-	Nil
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts:			
(i) By the Local Authority	-	-	"
(ii) By other bodies or persons	-	-	"

1. Unfit dwelling houses.

Inspection - (1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	163
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910, or the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925.	88
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	Nil
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	63

2. Remedy of Defects without Service of formal Notices.

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers.	-	-	16
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3. Action under Statutory Powers.

A. - Proceedings under section 3 of the Housing Act 1925.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs (Statutory notices in 24 cases were served in January of this year).	
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit:-	
(a) by owners	2
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	Nil
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close	1

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B.- Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	-	2
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied:-		
(a) by owners	-	1
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	-	Nil
(Proceedings instituted during the present year in the case not remedied).		

C.- Proceedings under sections 11, 14, & 15, of the Housing Act, 1925.

(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders	-	Nil
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made	-	"
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit	-	"
(4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	-	"
(5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	-	"

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Inspection of Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops for the Year.

Number of cowkeepers and milksellers on register	-	11
Number of premises - cowsheds	-	12
dairies	-	-
milkshops	-	-
Number of inspections	-	24
Defects found (1) in cowsheds -		
(a) floor or cubic space	-	-
(b) ventilations	-	1
(c) lighting	-	1
(d) structure of floor	-	1
(e) drainage	-	1
(f) cleanliness	-	12
(2) in surroundings of cowsheds	-	1
(3) in sanitary condition of drains	-	1
(4) in sanitary condition of milkshops	-	-
(5) in water supply	-	-
Number of notices - verbal and written	-	12
Number of these notices complied with	-	11
Number of defects found and not yet remedied	-	6

T. P. JORDAN.

No action has been taken as to tuberculous milk and tuberculous cattle.

No licences for the sale of milk under Special Designations granted or applied for.

Three registrations of retailers were withheld pending satisfactory improvements. In two cases the necessary work was carried out during the year and the premises registered; in the third the work is reported to be in hand.

Meat. The Local Sanitary Inspector who holds the Meat Inspectors' Certificate was appointed inspector under the Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924. He reports:- There are 5 slaughter houses all in the town area. Slaughtering is in most cases carried out at regular times and days, so that inspection at times of slaughter is carried out in most cases.

Meat unfit for food is condemned and destroyed in the destructor.

A record is kept of all meat condemned together with particulars of disease, etc., and during the period April 1st 1925, to December 31st 1925, about 605 lbs weight of meat has been condemned and destroyed by the inspector. Of this amount about 90 lbs was affected with tuberculosis, and 515 lbs. affected by other diseased conditions. No case of generalised tuberculosis was found.

Meat Marking. During the year the Council applied for permission of the Ministry of Health to mark meat and such permission has been granted. A stamp approved by the Ministry has been purchased and permission has been obtained from two out of the five butchers to mark their meat, this consists of about two thirds of the meat of the town, it is hoped that other butchers will take up meat marking in the near future.

Re Stalls, Shops and Stores. There are no stalls in the town for meat purposes, all retailing being from shops, all of which have enclosed fronts. No action has been necessary under this part of the Regulations. (No Cold Storage).

Slaughter houses.

	<u>1920.</u>	<u>In Jan. 1925.</u>	<u>In Dec. 1925.</u>
Registered	2	2	2
Licenced	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>

The Council during the year issued a licence for the additional slaughter house for 15 years.

Other Foods. The Inspector has inspected articles of food where requested, about 20 lbs. of tinned foods being condemned as unsound.

Bakehouses. These have been kept in a satisfactory sanitary condition throughout the year and no action has been found necessary.

Other Places where food is prepared. Apart from meat sellers and bakers there are no places in the town where food is prepared.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Laboratory Work. The County Council provides for bacteriological examination in cases of Diphtheria, Enteric and Tuberculosis, by arrangement with Birmingham University, free of cost.

Diphtheria Antitoxin is supplied by the District Council, free of cost to cases of the poorer class, through a local chemist who supplies medical men upon request. Antitoxin is in general use in all but very slight cases. In accordance with the recommendations of the Ministry of Health's Memorandum of July, 1922, the contracting chemist was instructed to hold and supply antitoxin in phials of 8,000 units for treatment, and of 500 units for protective use.

Disinfection. The Council is provided, jointly with the Clun R.D.C., with a 'Thresh' Emergency Steam Disinfector. The apparatus is housed at the Workhouse.

